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by a wide maroon border. One might call the carpet in this room rather too furiously red. An immense mantel-piece is at the west side, wrought in two-colored woods, and in verde-antique marble with inlaid bronze panels containing figures in bold relief. The steel-and-bronze grate is ornamented by two splendid steel griffons, after the manner of andirons.

The two private dining-rooms are of a much more unobtrusive style. In these we find such delightful features as a carved ebony table; crystal chandeliers, arranged as brackets, in each corner; brown and pale-buff furniture, relieved with mediæval shapes of dragons; carpet of a half-Eastern, half-Gothic design, with the Oriental yellow as the basis of color; and papering of the favorite brown, bronze and gold mixture, with something of a tapestry texture.

Altogether, the Union Club, since its recent decorations were made, occupies a high position among the most luxurious of New York structures. Refinement is everywhere evident, tempering anything like a too lavish display, and winning from wealthful expenditure its best practical results.

EDGAR FAWCETT.

### THE DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY ROOMS.

WHEN the Decorative Art Rooms were first opened in New York, not long ago, the enterprise was an experiment. It was the first definite attempt which had been made to collect this artistic handwork of which so much had been done since the Centennial Exhibition, and put it on the market in a regular business way. It was an attempt to bring women who wanted the work to do, into direct communication with women who wanted the work done; for, although it is by no means a feminine monopoly, the pretty rooms on East Nineteenth street are full of the handiwork of women, and probably women are the principal traffickers in these dainty wares.

The enterprise is a success. The experiment has proved a most palpable hit. At a very moderate commission on the sales, the rooms have proved self-supporting financially; women in all parts of the country find here a market for any work of genuine value; the demand for decorative art work has been stimulated by being systematically supplied, and, fortunately for all concerned, a good standard of excellence in work has been maintained by a committee who set their faces as a flint against artistic rubbish.

Work, in order to be accepted and placed on sale, must have a certain amount of artistic beauty and good mechanical execution, while on pieces of unusual excellence the seal of the society is bestowed.

An hour in these decorative art salesrooms gives one a very fair idea of what American women are doing just now. The first object which attracts the attention of the visitor on entering the hall, is an old-fashioned distaff with its bunch of flax. A distaff is the latest whim of the devotees of bric-à-brac, and has found its way from the neglected garret into many an American parlor. Who would have thought there were so many? Or is there a manufactory where they supply the demand for old-fashioned spinning wheels? Opposite hangs a medallion in plaster, a piece of specimen work in modeling, and below is the card of the teacher, stating terms for lessons.

Entering the front room at the right, one's first impression is of a bazaar full of dainty fabrics, and vivid with color, which is so broken into bits, that it gives a kaleidoscopic effect. All this color resolves itself presently into screens, decorated china, on the mantel, in cases and hanging on the wall, and also large cases full of Kensington art needlework.

This work is, much of it, beautiful and effective. It is done in every variety of color and material, from the design on burlap or self-colored canvas, done in the Kensington crewels, which will wash, up to the most elaborate satin screens, embroidered in silk. From the beginning of time, women have found pleasure and profit in needlecraft, and I have seen birds and branches as faithfully wrought out in silk embroidery by one of our New England grandmothers, who had only her "sampler stitch" to guide her, as any of this royal art needlework. The difference in the value of that work and such as this lies wholly in the design. Women have learned to draw, and so, whatever the design, it has an artistic value and means something. For instance, this "etching" on a gray canvas screen of the figure of a woman catching birds in a net in the air. It is exquisitely drawn; the figure, with its wind-blown drapery, has the strong and simple outlines of the antique. The birds are live birds, executed with such spirit that you can almost hear the light rush of their wings in flight. This is, in design, the best piece of needlework in the room, and is one of the only two which have been stamped with the seal of the society.

The design is drawn by the Vice-President of the so-

ciety and worked out by a lady who does much of this work, and who would earn much more money than she already does if she were able to draw her own designs. This emphasizes the fact that women who wish to earn money by doing this kind of work must have art training. They must be independent in design. The artisan must be also the artist, or else must be content with the second-rate wages always awarded to mere mechanical execution.

Another beautiful screen on which the seal of the society has been placed, is of yellow satin, bordered with a wide margin of rich maroon velvet and fringe. Across this gold background is thrown a blackberry branch, in leaf and blossom. It is very faithfully done, both in drawing and in color.

A very little experience in drawing our American plant-forms teaches one to go for beauty and sharpness of outline in the leaf and flower, to wild flowers and weeds, rather than to the petted plants of the greenhouse. Out in the still green spaces of the woods, they grow as they please, and keep their individuality, while cultivated flowers, like cultivated people, are apt to be very much alike. "The æsthetic bulrush" waves in every corner of these decorative art rooms, and when this has been neglected, the artist has still found her most effective designs among plants which bear it a family resemblance. Strong-leaved flags, "fleur-de-lis," stately golden-rod are here, while ferns and grasses have a quaint, delicate beauty of which one never tires.

These screens are framed, some of them in ebonized wood, and some in light wood, as maple, according to color. Some of the frames are elaborately carved, some are entirely plain. In the cases filled with needlework, are articles of every variety, from the tiny Japanese doyleys, with a bird or butterfly, or hieroglyphic etched on them, to the elaborate tablespread of satin, of the most æsthetic shade of green, and embroidered in gold. There are window curtains and hangings for portières. There are embroidered panels for chairs, and several chairs, upholstered, display the work to advantage.

There is much decorated china, of various degrees of excellence in execution. On the whole, the work indicates a hopeful outgrowth from the idea that decoration is picture-making. The work is done in a truer spirit, with more simplicity, and consequently with more effect than in our first amateur work, and we are not nearly so likely, as we were in the beginning of our ceramic craze, to get a lovely face on a painted dinner plate, or Guido's Aurora on a plaque. Some one has dared to put Cabanel's "Echo," in sepia colors on a plaque, and although the mechanical execution is fair, one shivers at the glitter of the enamel and the hard outlines of the figure. The committee should not have passed it. It is bad art. The prettiest and most satisfying decorations on exhibition are those which throw single flowers and grasses, with an occasional bird or butterfly across the solid tinted background.

Some of the little wooden plates decorated in water-color are very well done. The plates themselves are quite dainty. They are made of clean, sweet maple, cut into sheets the thickness of blotting paper, and then bent into shape. One is decorated in the peacock feather, now so popular, and on another is a bit of golden-rod, with a blue bird flying over it. Sometimes the wood is so shaded in color that it has the effect of a sky, across which birds are flying.

There is illuminated stationery in all colors and designs; all the pretty and dainty trifles that a fertile fancy can conceive.

Among the pottery is one tiny jug, which one familiar with her work recognizes instantly as that of Miss McLaughlin, of Cincinnati, who has rediscovered the Limoges glaze, and is producing much exquisite work. This little jug is a specimen of that falence. As unmistakably characteristic of the artist are Madam Teresa Hegg's water-colors which hang here on the wall, two flower pieces, which have been sent all the way from Germany by this celebrated flower painter. There are a number of decorated tiles, some of them very good in design, and some very commonplace, with a sore lack of imagination. Two young ladies in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, have sold much of this work here. They fill orders promptly, and do good work.

A set of tiles around a grate is done in a running design of holly. In drawing and color, it is bold and effective, rather than beautiful.

There is very little wood-carving. Two hall chairs in oak, elaborately carved and upholstered in green leather, are the work of some carver in this city. Of women's work in wood, there are but two specimens, a hanging cabinet and a parlor easel with two sliding shelves and a portfolio. Both articles are of black walnut, elaborately carved in natural and conventional designs; they are from St. Louis, and have the characteristics of what is known as the Cincinnati wood-carving.

Two bas-reliefs in plaster, on an easel, are marked "sold." One gives two cranes, against the background of a closed barn door. The other is a group of the same birds with the addition of a woman with a baby in her arms. One or two other small pieces in full relief complete the modeling on exhibition, all of which is the work of two ladies in Newark.

There are mirror frames, some of which are pretty and unique. One is a beveled frame of ebonized wood, painted in sprays of purple convolvuli. Another is a flat frame of dead gold; trailing across the top and half-way down the side are some scarlet running vine, with sharp pointed leaves, like tongues of flame; and across the top and turning the corner in like manner, is written in old, quaint, illuminated text: "I behold my shadow, and pass." It is a pretty conceit, and beautifully executed.

This is a sketch, and by no means an exhaustive catalogue of the contents of the Decorative Art Rooms. It is pleasant to add, that while these notes were written, work was sold, orders were taken, and the rooms were constantly full of interested spectators and purchasers.

CALISTA HALSEY.

### OUR FIRST PAGE ILLUSTRATION.

THE etching by Jules Jacquemart, which illustrates our first page, shows us a "console" of the period of Louis XV. This piece of furniture, which is shaped like half of a table, is fastened against the wall, often in front of a mirror. The wood is elaborated with paintings, covered with hard varnish to imitate the effects produced by the Chinese lacquers, which were in vogue at the time this table was made. It is probably by the celebrated Martin, who gave his name to the varnish he discovered. He was only a carriage painter, but the simple words "Vernis par Martin" added to the signature of the artist would augment the value of an article ten-fold.

The assemblage of easy curves which combine to form the general outline and the elementary details of this "ensemble" are typical of that period of the history of designing, when the stately and heavy Louis XIV style had given place to more graceful forms which seem to bend themselves in homage to "la belle Du Barri," and her royal "La France." When the regency came, art felt the influence of a lax government, and style degenerated into the "Rocaille," and from there fell into the "Rococo."

The "garniture" of fine pieces which stands on the console belonged to Marie Antoinette. Under the reign of Louis XVI the art of decoration reached the most exquisite perfection it has yet attained in France.

The centre piece is a Chinese vase in craquelin, with mountings in gilt bronze, chiselled by Gouthière, the master of all French bronze workers. Since the reign of Louis XV, when the first embassy from China reached Paris, Chinese earthenware had become very fashionable, and the influence of Oriental design is very apparent in the Chinese figures, very French in style, which we find in the compositions of Watteau and Boucher, and which received the very appropriate cognomen of "Chinois de paravent." The figures in the candelabra are by Falconet, who, after he had adorned Versailles and Trianon with exquisite little bits of art, went to Russia to execute the colossal statue of Peter the Great.

The bases are in white marble, trimmed with bronze in "or mat."

### THE HARMONY OF COLORS.

WITH some of the Oriental nations, especially the Japanese, who have taught us so much in Decorative Art, the knowledge of harmony in color seems to be intuitive. The commonest designs of the Japanese artist or even artisan show how rarely the judgment of the workman is at fault in this regard. With us Americans, however, it is different. Those who understand the combination of colors with reference to artistic effect are decidedly in the minority. Many of the most beautiful combinations, it is true, are arrived at by chance, taste aiding in the selection; but there are certain principles underlying such happy results, indicating beforehand the colors that will blend appropriately, and anybody may learn these who will take the trouble to study the chromatic scale, as it may be called, which we give below. Any one of these colors placed in proximity to the colors that immediately precede or follow it will allow of that easy gradation or transition which results in harmony, while contrast will be obtained by a further range.

To apply these colors, supposing you wish to associate silver blond with an appropriate tint other than a different shade of blond, you may associate with tawny, or, if seeking an effective contrast, with violet red. Taking